DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 201 626 SP 018 046

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TITLE Future Relationships: Physical Education and Athletics.
PUB DATE Apr 81
NOTE 8p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (Boston, MA, April 15, 1981).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Ability; Academic Standards; *Athletes; *Athletics; Codes of Ethics; Competition; *Educational Malpractice; *Futures (of Society); Graduation Requirements; Higher Education; *Intercollegiate Cooperation; Physical Education; *Program Design; Student College Relationship

ABSTRACT

Two models of intercollegiate athletics, designed to eliminate academic scandals in college athletics, are proposed. Schools that proceed along the lines of a "Corporate Model" will function as profit-oriented, semiprofessional (or minor league) teams that emphasize the importance of national caliber and winning athletic events. These teams would continue to compete under the name of a university and use school facilities for practice and competition. However, athletes would have the option of enrolling as students at the university, but would not be required to be students. Revenue would be generated primarily through gate receipts, media coverage of events, and private donations. No revenue would be generated by university student fees, and there would be no state support. The schools that follow the "Educational Model" would maintain or develop close ties with the physical education departments and would emphasize the educational value of the intercollegiate athletic experience, attempting to maximize the student-athletes' opportunities for participation in both athletics and academics. (JD)

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Future Relationships: Physical Education and Athletics

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Paper Presented At
American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance
National Conference
Boston, Massachusetts
April 15, 1981

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Future Relationships: Physical Education and Athletics

Jean L. Perry

An unconscionable number of schools have been in the headlines of the sports pages during the past two years for reasons other than their athletic prowess. There have been allegations of players who never or rarely attended classes receiving baccalaureate degrees, of players receiving credit for courses never attended, of coaches' physical mistreatment of players, of altered transcripts, ineligible players, kickbacks for players, and slush funds. The list of allegations and the schools involved expands monthly. This growing list allows me to say with confidence that the governance, the structure, and perhaps even the function of intercollegiate athletics will change dramatically over the coming years. Almost by definition, as intercollegiate athletics changes, its relationship to physical education will also change.

The immediate response of university administrators to the current problems facing their intercollegiate athletic programs has been to reemphasize the academic integrity of their institutions. Increased emphasis is being placed on the importance of the "student" aspect of the student-athlete. University presidents are insisting that student-athletes be admitted by the same standards and using the same procedures as are used for other students. In many institutions the function of the academic counselor of the athletic program is being reduced to a support role for the campus academic advisors rather than providing the sole academic counseling for the student-athletes. Student-athletes and athletic programs are being held accountable for class attendance and legitimate completion of off-campus course work. All of which, on the surface, indicate a trend toward increased ties between the intercollegiate athletic program and

the academic institution.

However, I suggest that this will be a short-term reaction - some say over-reaction - and that coaches, athletic directors, and others involved in high-pressure intercollegiate athletic programs will resist this move toward increased emphasis on academics. Many individuals will insist that rather than increasing academic ties, those ties must be lessened if athletic programs are to stay, or are to become, competitive. I envision then a breaking away from academics by Division I and equivalent schools so that by the year 2000 we will have two models of intercollegiate athletics in the United States: (1) what I call the corporate model and (2) the educational model.

I envision the corporate model as appealing most to the current Division I and the more competitive Division II schools, with the educational model attracting the Division III and the less competitive Division II schools. The schools that follow the educational model will maintain or develop close ties with physical education departments and will emphasize the educational value of the intercollegiate athletic experience, attempting to maximize the student-athletes' opportunities for participation in athletics and in academics. Schools that proceed along the lines of the corporate model will function as profit-oriented, semi-professional (or minor league) teams that emphasize the importance of national caliber, winning athletic programs.

Schools which follow the corporate, or profit-oriented, model which I envision will maintain strong ties with higher education institutions. Those teams will continue to compete under the name of a university and will continue to use university facilities for practice and for competition. However, athletes at schools which follow the corporate model, will have the <u>option</u> of enrolling as students at that university. Students who choose to pursue a college degree

while competing in intercollegiate athletics will have the option to do so following the rules and regulations established for all students for matriculation and degree attainment. No special admission categories, or special sections of courses, or special advising will be conducted on behalf, or made available to, athletes. Many of the college presidents who have always had or who have recently developed a concerned interest in their athletic programs will probably view this concept with welcome relief. In addition coaches, athletic directors. and other personnel of the athletic programs which follow the corporate model will view with welcome relief the removal of the requirement of academic involvement of all athletes. Some of today's college athletes have no desire to attend college classes or to work toward a college degree. They are in school solely for the athletic competition and the potential long-range impact that competition can have on their future earning power. Under the rules established for the corporate model I envision, academics would not be forced on these athletes, thus reducing the likelihood of continuation of the academic scandals which have become all too frequent.

In the corporate model I envision, governance will be by a Board of Directors with the Athletic Director serving as Chairman of the Board. The chief executive officer of the university will function in a similar role to that of a president of a major corporation. The athletic program will be profit-oriented and probably will choose to incorporate. The only standard for athletic eligibility will be certification of high school graduation. There will be no requirement that an athlete be admitted to the university and therefore no qualitative or quantitative requirement that the athlete make normal progress toward a university degree. This in turn makes athletic scholarships unnecessary. Rather, the athletic program will pay its athletes to compete with one of several fringe

benefits being the opportunity to pursue a college degree if the athlete meets admission and retention requirements established by the university. Recruiting of athletes by coaches would probably be at least as intensive as it is now, if not even more so. Coaches would be employed by the corporation, not the university, thus eliminating the need for joint appointments with the physical education department. The corporation would continue to use the athletic facilities of the university so continued cooperation would be necessary among the athletic program, the physical education department, and other facilities users. No revenue for the corporation would be generated by university student fees and there would be no state support of the corporation. Revenue would be generated primarily through gate receipts, media coverage of events, and private donations. A national governing organization would exist primarily to organize and promote national championships. Since teams would compete under the name of the university and would use university facilities, the university and its alumni would maintain strong ties with the athletic program. However, since athletes have no obligations to be students, there would be a dramatic reduction in the potential for academic scandal. The corporate model that I envision may prove to be a university administrator's, as well as an athletic director's, dream!

The other model of intercollegiate athletics which I envision for the future enhances the relationship of athletics and physical education. The philosophy of schools which follow the educational model would be to promote the educational benefits of intercollegiate athletics. The educational model would be non-profit by definition with the bulk of the financial support for the athletic program coming from university student fees and/or state revenue. The athletic director and all coaches would be members of the university faculty or staff.

All participants in intercollegiate athletics would be primarily students, with their intercollegiate athletic competition seen as one aspect of their total educational experience. Student-athletes would meet the same admission standards as all other students. The normal progress toward a degree of student-athletes would be determined using the same qualitative and quantitative criteria applied to all students in the university. The athlete would be eligible for athletic competition for no more than four years or until completion of a baccalaureate degree, whichever comes first. Student-athletes who qualify would be eligible for university academic scholarships, but there would be no athletic scholarships per se. Recruiting of athletes would be limited and would be constricted by rules established by the national governing organization. Coaches would be judged by the quality of competition generated through the student-athletes who select their institution, rather than by the caliber of athlete which the coach can recruit to the institution. All student members of the athletic teams would be qualified students of the university, and all staff members of the athletic program would be faculty or staff of the university. With rare exception those staff members would be on the faculty of the physical education department; however, they might or might not be in tenure-track positions depending on the needs of the department and the qualifications of the staff member. The athletic director would report to the chair of the physical education department. The athletic facilities would be shared equally between the intercollegiate athletic program, the physical education instructional program, and the recreational program of the university. A national governing organization would establish rules pertaining to recruiting and the eligibility for competition of both the student-athlete and the institution. This national governing organization would also establish and regulate regional and national athletic competition.

The era of academic scandals in athletics is upon us. The options are to either clean-up our existing system of intercollegiate athletics or to change to a less scandal-prone system. The two-pronged approach to intercollegiate athletics which I envision for the future is neither radical nor revolutionary. Both systems, or the potential for both systems, currently exist. By limiting intercollegiate athletics to the two systems described, and by recognizing both systems as legitimate, the future of intercollegiate athletics as it relates to physical education looks bright. However, if we fail to initiate needed changes, some aspects of intercollegiate athletics will soon be beyond control, and that is a frightening prospect for all concerned - the institutions, the coaches, and especially the athletes.